



# Junior Brain Tumors in Action

Stories by  
Crad Kilodney



24.00

JUNIOR BRAIN TUMORS IN ACTION

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Crad Kilodney

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Charnel House

*Toronto, Canada*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Front cover by Matthew Brown.  
Inside drawing by Furpo Kilodney.

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## FOREWORD

As a service to the public, especially the mental health profession, the publishing industry, and my future biographers, I am happy to present the following form letter, which passed across my desk at Exposition Press and which has remained in my private files since 1972. I had originally worked it into a story in 1976, but the story was never published. Now I have decided simply to run the letter by itself rather than allow it to languish in my files indefinitely. This letter is authentic, and I have not changed a single word.

\*

July 1972

(Letter being sent to book publishers)

Dear Sir:

THE LAST TESTAMENT was written for the benefit of the fleshly human race and the author, God Principle, and his book agent are to receive absolutely no money for their writing and agency services.

A hasty spot check of THE LAST TESTAMENT by an experienced religious editor could lead to its rejection as another worthless contribution by a well-meaning "crackpot."

THE LAST TESTAMENT has some almost unbelievable information on satans (devils or unclean spirits) in it and it has some color pictures of Jesus Christ himself who was seen in a mental vision during AD12-1962 in the same basic manner that Paul saw him on the road to Damascus over 1,850 years earlier. To explain the preceding simple things to many clear thinking and intelligent people is almost as fruitless as

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trying to explain the Einstein Theory of Relativity to a horse, but unless these almost unbelievable things are included in the book the student may not fully understand the Biblical value of God Creator's Commandments.

It may amaze you to know how the thousands and thousands of invisible vaporous satans about you work. Should a book editor become sympathetic with THE LAST TESTAMENT he would most likely be put under observation by vaporous satans and everything he might say or do would be carefully watched. Fleshly people he knows might be watched and he may even be told by his superiors to put THE LAST TESTAMENT aside or to forget it altogether. The vaporous leader of the criminal organization of vaporous satans has soul powers which are somewhat like those of the vaporous God Creator and he (the supreme satan) can pass his invisible vaporous soul into unsuspecting fleshly human beings and cause them to say and do things that help him and his evil followers.

Some of the thousands of invisible vaporous satans about you may scrutinize everything you do with the sample manuscript pages and color slides and should you become aware of their true value vaporous satans may call in their vaporous leader who can do some unusual things through unsuspecting fleshly human beings to make the author of THE LAST TESTAMENT look like a fake of some kind. Should you or others about you suddenly feel a desire to throw the sample pages and color slides of THE LAST TESTAMENT into the waste-can or send them back before they have been carefully evaluated, you may have been under the influence of the supreme freely roving vaporous satan.

The book editor reading the sample manuscript pages of THE LAST TESTAMENT may suddenly find that his co-workers have become hard of hearing since invisible vaporous satans can block sound waves or that his co-workers have become nasty since the supreme invisible vaporous satan can make them that way.

The preceding almost unbelievable information may make it easier for you to complete the evaluation of the sample manuscript pages, but remember you can expect every trick imaginable from freely roving vaporous satans who are fighting God Principle with about everything they have.

I, God Principle, hope the preceding will help you, but should you find yourself unable to handle THE LAST TESTAMENT



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send the sample manuscript pages and color slides back and I will continue the struggle for publication with all of my resources which are presently limited to those possessed by an average fleshly human being. I am ready to give my life and everything I have for THE LAST TESTAMENT.

Sincerely yours,  
God Principle, a human member of One United God.

P.S. It should be added that the supreme freely roving vaporous satan can unlawfully pass into your fleshly human mind as you read the literature I sent you. Should he do this you may find that nothing seems to read right or that everything seems ridiculous or you may even find yourself referring to Bible verses that make everything seem out of order for what you are thinking about in that particular instance. You may find that a Bible expert (such as a Doctor of Theology), who is temporarily and unknowingly under the influence of the supreme vaporous satan, will reject many of the new things that you have discovered. The preceding things have happened before and I estimate that they will continue since the criminal organization of vaporous satans are fighting me with about everything they can muster. I experienced the preceding things after and while I wrote THE LAST TESTAMENT, but I refused to let unidentified vaporous beings alter my thinking and distort the written truth in the final version -- in fact I changed a great many of the original manuscript pages back and forth two or more times for no good reason before I finally got them the way they are now.

The unidentified vaporous beings that caused me to change the original manuscript pages back and forth indicated in one way or another that they were God. On one occasion an unidentified vaporous being tried to get me to laugh at a disgusting injustice which I had written about a short while before. On another occasion an unidentified vaporous soul tried to get me to do something degrading whereupon I raked the surrounding air with swinging fists before its vaporous mass backed off and everything subsided.

Just keep your wits and use good judgment and I think you may see what I and God Creator have to offer you in LOVE OTHERS AS YOURSELF, The Last Testament of the Bible.

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There is something else you should know, but since this is beyond the scope of this letter I will just mention it here. Two or three\* unidentified invisible vaporous (original) souls may work at the same time on you and whomever you happen to be talking to. In that case you and others about you will have mixed up thoughts until these unidentified vaporous beings leave you alone. One way around this is to wait and look at the literature at some other time when you don't feel hostile or indifferent towards it.

When the supreme vaporous satan unlawfully passes his invisible vaporous soul into the fleshly bodies of unsuspecting human beings he can cause them to walk around under his direction. Therefore don't be surprised if people about you suddenly walk off on you or suddenly decide that they must be some place else in a hurry should you approach them with information about THE LAST TESTAMENT. Should you unlawfully be double or triple teamed by unidentified invisible vaporous original souls you may see an entire group of fleshly people walk off on you or simply just ignore you.

Christian doctrine that states that you can be saved by grace through faith (in Christ) has been superseded by what is given to you in THE LAST TESTAMENT. You may see why this is so after you read and understand THE LAST TESTAMENT.

There is one thing that God Creator and I will not compromise on and this is One United God's Commandments. The vaporous God Creator's Stone Carved Commandments as given to the fleshly Moses before 1200BC have never been superseded in any way whatsoever by Christ's fleshly sacrifice on the cross. These commandments, which include YOU SHALL NOT KILL, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, & YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, have been in effect ever since they were written, they are in effect today, and they shall remain in effect until the end of time. Before 1200BC and during the 3rd month after the division of the Red Sea the fleshly Moses received the vaporous God Creator's Stone Carved Commandments at Mt. Sinai. Moses recorded these laws in Exodus 20 & Deuteronomy 5.

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\*These three separate living beings (one of whom is the supreme satan) each have an original soul which was torn out of God Creator who was the original or first soul to come into existence.

## JUMPING RUBBER MAGGOT TIME

Grungeo and his son, Smeg, stopped just short of the martial arts store when they encountered a weirdo standing on the sidewalk displaying something unfamiliar. Grungeo looked at the weirdo and at the object, and his brain got confused and caused the right side of his face to scrunch up. His beetle brows wrinkled above his weak, beady eyes, and the hairs in his nostrils stiffened. Even his intestines paused for a moment in their digestion of the fried horse's anus he and Smeg had enjoyed at the Roller Games Arena.

"Wuz dis ting?" said Grungeo. The weirdo, not liking Grungeo's looks, smiled faintly and replied that the object was (*noun deleted*). Grungeo took the object from him, his eyes running wildly over it, his sweaty hands bending the corners. "You givin' dis away? Wuzzit for? I don't get it." He opened it roughly, creasing the pages. His eyes fell randomly on the print. "Is it fer God or what? Wuzzis word? Why's it say dis? Wuz dis word mean? Huh?"

The weirdo, wishing to be rid of Grungeo, replied, "It's really a new kind of fish disguised as (*noun deleted*)."

"Waddya mean, a fish? Why's dis a fish? You crazy?"

Little Smeg stood immobile the whole time, his face a complete blank. He wore a t-shirt with the logo of a heavy metal band: a sword plunging through the skull of an emaciated man being electrocuted in an electric chair while a scantily clad woman with big breasts lay at his feet being swallowed from both head and feet by two enormous snakes. In the upper left, a hairy arm descending from a black cloud held a bloody dagger, while in the upper right, a two-headed dragon breathed red flames in which could be read the word *DEATH!* The shirt was stained with a big gob of ketchup and numerous crusts of snot up to a week old.

Grungeo handed the object back to the weirdo and walked away without a word, Smeg trailing behind. Then they saw the

display in the window of the martial arts store with a foot-high figure of a child swathed in black and holding a sword, and they went inside because this was something they could both understand. Father and son were two minds as one, at one with the store and the street and the world in general -- knowing few words yet knowing what made them happy.

At home in the housing project, a complex of four shabby, overpriced high-rises known as Utopia--Phases One, Two, Three, and Four (all phases being equally squalid, and differing only in the varying criminal records of their superintendents), Mrs. Grungeo (who had no name of her own, being defined as an appendage of Grungeo -- in essence, the vagina available to Grungeo's dick, and the mother of the humanoid organism Smeg) boiled a pot of newborn shrews while listening to the radio, which reminded her of things she would have to buy to make their good life even better. She sang along with this jingle:

*Agincourt Mall*

*The friendly people place*

*We're the ones who put the fun in fungus*

*Agincourt Mall*

*We're all there for you*

*We'll throw you into a pool*

*With an ugly giant squid*

*Have a good day at Agincourt Mall!*

The grease-covered electric clock above the sink droned sickly as the red second hand went around and around and around, and the minute hand crept at a speed just below what could be seen, and the hour hand somehow made its way around with cosmic slowness, and time fell away simply like dregs and grit and assorted muck down the germ-ridden drain of life. And the sun and moon rose and fell upon them thousands of times from a futile distance. And had the constellations rearranged themselves a different way every night, neither Grungeo nor Mrs. Grungeo nor little Smeg would have ever noticed, for these were people who, although locked into space, were strangely locked out of historical time.

Every evening after dinner, Mrs. Grungeo would wash the dishes and then sit in the bathroom with her homemakers' magazines, shitting difficult, misshapen turds while contemplating frappes, mousses, and cakes made with tropical fruits,



and Grungeo and Smeg would pull up their chairs and open the door of the closet and watch the jumping rubber maggots.

You must picture it this way: the closet is a small clothes closet with the rack full of old clothes and Mrs. Grungeo's fur coat (dog fur, misrepresented as coyote by the mail-order company she bought it from) encased in a plastic protector. On the floor of the closet is a layer of tiny black things that seem at times alive and at times mechanical. They make no sound. The rubber maggots crawl, wriggle, and jump randomly, but only a minority of them are very good jumpers, and the fun is in catching them in the act.

"I seen one!" says Smeg excitedly, as his father grunts his confirmation.

Sometimes the maggots jump very high indeed -- high enough to land on the bottom of the hanging clothing, and then Grungeo and Smeg lean closer and put a flashlight on them to see how far up they will crawl. Mrs. Grungeo reminds them not to let them get inside the protector of her good coat because she has to wear it to church twice a year.

Some of the maggots stand out because of white markings or because of their size or peculiar movements, and these are the ones that Grungeo and Smeg take a special interest in and have given names to, like Scottie, Duke, Bob, Roger, Dean, George, and Darth. George is Grungeo's favorite because he's named after his hero, George Wallace. Darth is Smeg's favorite, and he imagines him getting into the collar of Mom's coat and crawling down her back in church.

When Mrs. Grungeo finishes crapping, she usually joins her boys in front of the closet to watch the jumping rubber maggots. She didn't like them at first, but now she likes them. They came with the apartment. From what she has learned from the other women in the laundry room, many of the units in the building have a special maggot closet, and these are considered the more desirable units.

She pulled up her chair and casually picked at a scab on her leg. "Smeg, what was dat new word you learnt in school de udder day?"

Smeg picked his nose in thought. "De new word? It was ...uh...BLEH!"

"Bleh?...Dat sure is a nice word. Wuzzit mean?"

"I dunno. Dey only use it in school anyways."

"Bleh," repeated Mrs. Grungeo for her own delectation.



"You should use it outside o' school too. It sounds like a good learnin' word."

"Yah," agreed Grungeo. "Ya gotta have some good learnin' words to get tru life."

Grungeo's occupation was ripping the heads off lambs and goats with his bare hands at the Nescience Packing House. It was a large company that offered good fringe benefits, an agreeable working environment with lots of blood, and an opportunity to bring home animal parts that did not pass inspection. (Technically, this was against the rules, but the supervisors did it too.) Grungeo used no mechanical aids whatever, just his hands. The trick was to pin the animal down on its back, step firmly on its thorax, and pull the head off. Grungeo's union was The Brotherhood of Food Processing Technologists and Educational Workers. It was the only union in the city that the Mafia would have nothing to do with. Its president (and Grungeo's best friend) was a man named Melbert Splack, who believed that all vegetarians were space aliens, who enjoyed giving himself electric shocks on a bet to win free drinks in bars, and who had a basement full of inflatable rubber women, whom he raped nightly.

Mrs. Grungeo, it is worth mentioning, was also her husband's second cousin; hence they knew each other from an early age. They came from large families that lived within sight of each other in a village called Goobies. Mrs. Grungeo's most successful sibling, Winston, completed grade 5 and had worked in a gas station. He was killed when his co-workers placed the air hose up his ass as a joke, telling him nothing would happen. Mr. Grungeo himself was the most successful sibling of his family.

"Dad?" asked Smeg as they watched the maggots, "why do we got dese tings?"

"Cause dey're popular, dat's all."

Smeg nodded. He loved the maggots very much. He thought they were well-behaved and very smart because for some odd reason they never came out of the closet, even though there was plenty of space under the door.

"Dad, I have a question," said Smeg.

"About what?"

"Dese tings."

"Yeah?"

"Is dey, like...*alive*, or is dey, like...*artificial*?"

"I guess dey're both, Son. Dey're sorta like us."

Smeg looked at his father fondly. *My fodder is a great man. He knows tings.*

The phone rang. Mrs. Grungeo answered it. "HELL-o."

"Good evening, Madam. We're taking a survey. We would like to ask you a question."

"Yeah? What?"

*"The human person is more than a private collation of wounds. He is, among other things, an exigent knower, impelled by a pure desire to ransack the darkness around him for sense, compassion, humor, and grace. Does this apply to you?"*

Mrs. Grungeo picked a large dandruff flake off her scalp and put it in her mouth. "Uh...I don't tink so. We're just a normal family. My husband works, and I do de housework. I use bleach fer de white tings, and I do de colors separate."

"Thank you for your time. Good-bye."

"We vote Liberal. Dey're for de little people...Hello? ...Hello?..."

On Sunday afternoons the Grungeo family would go for a walk. Mr. Grungeo would wear his favorite t-shirt, which bore the slogan *"Smile if your (sic) not wearing panties."* Mrs. Grungeo would wear leopard-spot stretch pants and a bowling shirt purchased from a second-hand store on Queen St. catering to the obese and insane. Little Smeg would wear whichever of his pants had the fewest urine stains and a t-shirt depicting a popular wrestler or psychopath. Smeg would hold on to his mother's hand, and she would hold on to her husband's hand, while he carried in his other hand a \$20 Yorx cassette tape recorder. Thus did they waddle along trendy Yorkville Avenue, accompanied by the garbled sounds of *Ace Cannon's Saxophone Favorites*. Smeg would miraculously manage to step on every dog turd on the sidewalk. Mrs. Grungeo would comment like a retarded parrot about things she saw in the shop windows, her only three comments being "Dat's nice," "Lookit dat," or "Wuz dat?" Grungeo was generally silent, not thinking much about anything, for he had no thoughts as such, just fleeting images of money, nude women, and his job.

On one such Sunday afternoon jaunt along Yorkville, Grungeo had to take a leak very badly, and seeing nothing open, he went over beside the library and pissed against the

wall. A well-dressed couple across the street stopped and stared in shocked amazement. The woman said, "Oh, that's disgusting." Mrs. Grungeo shouted at them angrily, "Mind yer own business! He works hard fer us! He's entitled! You don't know how hard he works! Go home en piss in yer gold-plated terlets, ya bastards!" The couple walked away slowly, turning around several times to look at the Grungeos.

Mr. Grungeo came back smiling as he adjusted his pants and spat a gob of phlegm in the general direction of the offended couple across the street.

"Dad?" asked Smeg. "Wuz dis building?"

"I dunno."

Smeg asked his mother. "Mom, wuz dis building?"

She looked at it for several seconds before replying.

"It's a liberry."

"A liberry?"

"Yeah. It's just a place fulla books."

"It's a good buildin' fer pissin', ha!" said Grungeo, playfully tousling Smeg's hair and feeling full of a zest for life.

Even for the lowest creatures of our species there come moments that philosophers would term ecstasy, moments that crystallize the greatest joy such creatures are capable of. They may be categorized approximately as follows: 1) orgasm, 2) excretion, 3) food, 4) toys, 5) money, 6) violence, and 7) intoxication. For most of the human race these types of ecstasy constitute The Seven Pillars of Wisdom.

On their way home from Yorkville Avenue, the Grungeos walked by a dried puddle of vomit by the curb that had been left the previous night by a young man who worked for an advertising agency. Although dry, the vomit still smelled. Mrs. Grungeo glanced down at the multicolored splotch, and an odd pattern of shapes caught her eye. "Jesus!" she exclaimed. "Look! It's de face o' Jesus!"

"Where?" asked Grungeo.

"Down dere! Lookit! See? Dere's de eyes, en de mout, en de beard....Holy Mudder o' God, it's a sign!" She got down on her knees before the vomit stain, hands clasped as if in prayer, and tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Tank you, Lord!" said Grungeo, looking up between the skyscrapers. He looked down again at the vomit stain. The face wasn't too clear to him, but he thought there was at

least a general resemblance. And there was no mistaking his wife's instinct for such things, as she was the one who followed the religious TV shows and had once got herself healed of tularemia by putting her chest against the TV screen.

"Is it God, Daddy?" asked Smeg.

"Yes, Son. It's a sign from God."

"What for?"

"What for? Why...it means dat everyting's gonna be fine fer us, jes fine."

Mrs. Grungeo stood up. "We been chosen to see dis. It was meant fer us. Oh, I tink we gonna be rich."

"Yeah, dat would be nice!" agreed Grungeo.

"Can I have a Snake Pit game and a Cosmic Avenger fer Christmas, Dad?" asked Smeg.

"Son, you can have anyting ya want."

And the Grungeos waddled back toward Utopia (Phase One), feeling more special than they had felt in years -- since the time Mrs. Grungeo won a plaster bust of Elvis in a raffle sponsored by the Ukrainian Professional and Business Club.

For Mr. Grungeo, insofar as his inner life was concerned, the moment was at least real neat if not sublime. But a short time later, his joyful mood was ruined when he spotted a punk couple around 15 years old, for he suddenly felt the terrible burden of a world full of scum -- scum that deserved to be exterminated. And he, Grungeo, having been sent a sign by God less than five minutes before, ought to be the first to do something about it. And as the Grungeos passed the two kids, Grungeo growled at the boy, "Ya little piece o' shit."

"You're the shit!" the boy shot back.

Grungeo took a step toward the boy, ready to smash his head with one punch. The girl tried to pull her boyfriend away, but he stood his ground, not really expecting to get hit.

"Come on, dear," said Mrs. Grungeo blandly.

"Nobody uses curse words in frunna my wife en kid!" snarled Grungeo. And he punched the boy just above the left eye, knocking him down. The girl screamed. Smeg thought, *My daddy is a big hero!*

"Dat's from me *en* Jesus!" growled Grungeo. "Now get off de fuckin' street, ya little shits!"

"Oh, come on, dear," Mrs. Grungeo repeated, just a tad



annoyed, and Grungeo reluctantly caught up with her and resumed walking. "Maybe ya should'na done dat, dear. Ya mighta got a disease from touchin' 'im."

"Never mind," said Grungeo, spitting. "I'd beat de shit outa any germ."

And they continued toward home, with Grungeo playing his cheap little cassette player at full volume so that the super terrific sounds of Ace Cannon would fill the street like trumpets of victory heralding the return of the victorious conqueror from the battlefield.

A half block behind, the punk girl was crying against her boyfriend's chest as he leaned against a wall and covered his bleeding cut with her hankie.

"Paradise Here Now," read the headline of the paper, which Mrs. Grungeo plopped on the kitchen table along with the groceries -- weasel grease, pickled bat testicles, licorice chemical waste twists, flaked gorilla snot, microwavable chicken heads in formaldehyde sauce, jellied ear wax with crunchies, grated hemlock bark, and garlic low-cal slime mold. "Wuz dis mean here in de paper?" she asked Grungeo.

He looked at it for a long moment as beer drool came out of the corner of his mouth. "It's jes advertisin'. Forget it."

He cracked open another beer and sat down in front of the maggot closet. Little Smeg had brought home a dead bird that had fallen off a high-tension wire, and he was tossing it up and down like a ball. "Dad, maybe I should trow de bird to de maggots."

"What for, Son?"

"Maybe dey'd like it. Sumpin to play wit."

"Good idea. Let's see."

And Smeg tossed the dead bird right on top of the squirming layer of maggots. They responded automatically, and the dead bird was soon covered. The maggots crawled into its eyes, beak, and nostrils.

Mrs. Grungeo had read the news article carefully but couldn't understand it. "Paradise Here Now." She looked out the window. *I don't see no Paradise. Shit. Dey must tink we stupid. Shit.*

"Smeg!" she called as she prepared the dinner. "Come in here!"



Smeg came into the kitchen. "What?"

"Wuzzen you playin' wit Freddy de udder day?"

Smeg thought. "Yeah."

"Do ya know what he got? He got a disease. He's home sick. He got ant tracks."

"Ant tracks? Wuz dat?"

"Some kinda disease. De lady in de laundry room told me about it. Ya get it from aminal droppin's. She said he prolly put his dirty hands in his mout en got de ant tracks dat way. And you wuz playin' wit 'im."

"Aw, Mom. I din't catch nuttin'. I'm careful."

"I worry about you, ya know. A mudder worries about her kids. I don't want you catchin' some disease. De world's fulla diseases. Everywhere ya go, it's all bad diseases. And dere's all dose foreign kids in school. You don't know who dey are or where dey been or what deir families are like. From now on, I don't want you playin' wit dem foreign kids. You jes stick to yer own kind."

"Yes, Mom." And Smeg returned to his seat beside his father, while Mrs. Grungeo tried to concentrate on fixing dinner and not dwell on the bad things in the world that her child would have to face. And then she remembered the face of Jesus she had seen, and her spirits were lifted somewhat.

Maggots squirming, crawling, jumping. Happy maggots. Energetic maggots. Maggots with a bird to eat. Maggots waiting for a treat. Maggots singing happy songs. Maggots rubbing together and feeling social. Maggots jumping as high as Dad's trousers. Maggots jumping up to Mom's brown house coat. Maggots communicating contentment in their own squeaky language. Maggots in the closet. No day or night, just jumping rubber maggot time. Closet history, closet philosophy, closet culture, closet life and death. A closet universe. Scottie and Duke and Bob and Roger and Dean and George and Darth, and all the other happy maggots. Scottie, he say, *Yah, yah, poo, go*. Duke, he say, *Wee wee yah hey bloop*. Bob, he say, *ZZZZZit! Blee, snit!* Roger, he say, *G-g-g-g-guh flonga borp*. Dean, he say, *You go me up wee go high wee*. George, he say, *Snorta coat, shoe shoe, brella zippee-yah*. Darth, he say, *Buh-loo-loo-arr-ja-koon-a, HNUH!*

And when the closet door opens...they...see...their... GODS! Big Gods! One, two, or three Gods! And they go, *Yah*,

*Gods are looking, so let's jump HIGH! Let's jump HIGH! Oh, Gods are looking at us, we so happy!*

It's a curious red snow that falls ever so softly on the city for the first snow of the season. A hundred miles to the west, a tractor-trailer full of cattle has collided with a truck full of explosives on a wet highway during a violent storm. The cattle have been blown to bits, and their blood has been carried aloft by the winds and is just now coming down in the snow. All the people on the street are amazed. They have never seen such a sight before -- *red snow*. And they forget themselves as their prehistoric brain parts kick in, and they start jumping, jumping at the red snow, jumping to catch the blood-red flakes. It is a meteorological phenomenon sure to be mentioned on the news.

From the window of his office on the top floor of a tall university building, an anthropologist looks out at the crowds below, who, from this distance, seem like so many bugs jumping up and down. He drops the pages of his latest book manuscript, *Deep Things I Learned From Aborigines*, to the floor, as a childish smile lights up his face and bubbles of drool appear on his lips. "Bleh!" he says happily. "Bleh, bleh!" His head bobs quickly, in time to an inner beat. "Bleh-bleh...bleh-bleh...bleh-bleh...bleh-bleh...."

## THE GREAT VOMITO

Things have been very tough for me since the arrival of The Great Vomito. To be more specific, it has been virtually impossible for me or any other serious artist in this city to get any exposure in the media. They only want to talk to The Great Vomito. There is scarcely any news any more except news concerning The Great Vomito. The public thinks only of The Great Vomito. They have caught him like a contagious disease. So sudden, dramatic, and inexplicable (at least to me) has the impact of The Great Vomito been that I could not be more shocked by discovering a dead horse at the foot of my bed tomorrow morning.

The timing has been particularly unfortunate for me because after a period of ten years of the most intense, all-consuming work and its inevitable sacrifices I was nearly ready to present to the world what may be the masterpiece of my life, and I was rather hoping it would get the attention it deserves. Now it appears that the public will never know about it. I would do just as well to bury it in the backyard or whisper it in Latin on the subway as to try the normal channels of publicity now. It's quite useless, for who am I compared to The Great Vomito?

You think I am exaggerating the problem, but I assure you I am not. Just this morning I was to be interviewed by a part-time contributing reporter for a small paper distributed free in donut shops. However, she called me at 8 a.m., awakening me from exactly the sort of fitful sleep I require to work out my creative problems subconsciously, to inform me most apologetically that she had to cancel our appointment in order to interview The Great Vomito. (His schedule as a famous person is so tight that one gets to him at the time he allows or not at all.) Her publisher had literally stopped the presses to redo the entire issue, which was now to be devoted almost entirely to The Great Vomito. This would be an

inconvenience to some, but there was a lot of advertising revenue at stake, etc., etc., and surely I could understand the situation. "We'll try again another time, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_," she said, mispronouncing my name. Already she was beginning to forget me.

Meanwhile, today alone I saw The Great Vomito on four TV stations. A feature item on Channel 3 dealing with his clothes closet took up more time than their coverage of the current civil war in China. There are already two instant biographies of The Great Vomito in bookstores. This would not bother me but for the fact that a little book of my own has been delayed more than a year due to my publisher's lack of funds.

But just who is The Great Vomito? At the risk of being regarded as a lunatic, ignoramus, or social criminal, I confess that I do not know exactly why The Great Vomito is famous. (Several of my colleagues have also admitted their ignorance in this matter, which is a source of embarrassment to them.) It would seem that The Great Vomito is one of those extraordinary celebrities who are famous for being famous, like that Hungarian lady whose name escapes me at the moment. How they became famous in the first place hardly matters. As far as The Great Vomito is concerned, I believe he is famous in the entertainment world and that he is or was married to someone famous and may have been involved in some scandal. I'm not sure. My awareness of his existence until recently was subliminal at best. If there was, in fact, a scandal in his past, it does not appear to have done him any harm. You cannot walk one block down a busy street of this city without seeing numerous evidences of his preeminence in the public's mind and heart. Children carry Great Vomito lunch boxes to school. Grown men (and women) with beer bellies wear t-shirts with The Great Vomito's likeness and corporate logo (stained with authentic vomit). The local gourmet hamburger joint is now selling a Vomitoburger. His face is on the cover of every popular magazine and tabloid. He has lent his name to a golf tournament to raise money for extremely ugly children. He had lunch with the Pope and dinner with the Dalai Lama on the same day. There is no segment of society (apart from a few wretched souls like me) that does not love and admire The Great Vomito.

To even attempt to compete with The Great Vomito for



media attention is, of course, out of the question. Even on days when The Great Vomito doesn't bother to get out of bed -- and I would not presume to say that this is ever the case in view of his crowded schedule but am merely postulating a hypothetical circumstance -- he is newsworthy. In fact, he might well be even more newsworthy for not getting out of bed. The press would be frantic to know if perhaps he had been taken ill, or whether he might be having a torrid affair with an as-yet unidentified society woman, or whether he might be secretly planning some spectacular exploit. Meanwhile, the greatest literary accomplishment on my part would not be enough to induce a cub reporter to return my calls. And as The Great Vomito's fame continues to feed upon itself, the situation becomes increasingly hopeless for me. I am reminded of the Gospel of Matthew, which states that he who has shall be given even more. The troubling corollary is that he who has not shall lose what little he has. There is no help for it: I shall soon be down to my last tablespoon of peanut butter. I do have a reading engagement at the Café des Perdus, where I have been promised 50% of the door, but as luck would have it, The Great Vomito is appearing at the new domed stadium at exactly the same time. I intend to read the best work I have, of course, but the only people likely to be in attendance are a few of my colleagues and the staff.

I have tried to understand the basis for the public's fascination with The Great Vomito. I'll grant you at once that he is handsomer than I am, no question. There is not even the slightest blemish on his skin, as far as I can tell from seeing him on TV. His clothes are certainly dazzling, if sometimes bizarre, and he is never seen in the same outfit twice. My only winter coat cost me \$15 at the Salvation Army store. He has a stylish haircut, and his face expresses cheerfulness and goodness at all times, while even at my best I resemble a rather disheveled employee of a mortuary or else an ex-convict. He speaks very easily, albeit in monosyllables, while I often search for the right words and fail to find them. By every criterion of social acceptability I am as inferior to him as a flatworm is to a mammal. Sometimes I feel hatred for him, but I can't say that he has ever done anything to harm me personally. He doesn't even know I exist. No doubt, my hatred is fed by jealousy of his apparent perfection and the importance with which the public treats him. And



there is the insecurity he arouses in me as well, which causes me to question whether the public hasn't got us in the right proportion after all -- that is, that he deserves to be in his present place and I in mine. There is something to be said for knowing one's place in the world, but this is the very crux of my insecurity. I have never been sure of what my rightful place is, and the coming of The Great Vomito has caused me to doubt that I have a place of any significance at all.

I confess that at one point I considered approaching The Great Vomito -- or rather, someone representing The Great Vomito, for a person of my lowly station does not dare to approach The Great Vomito directly -- with a view in mind to securing some work within his organization. I thought there must be a place within it for a highly creative writer like myself. I would have gladly started at the bottom, doing the simplest or most unimportant tasks, so long as there were prospects for promotion. But then my conscience began to trouble me, and I thought of the great work at which I had labored for ten years, a work which in its heart is utterly contrary to all that The Great Vomito seems to represent. Perhaps it's for the best that I would never actually be invited to work for The Great Vomito because I don't know what choice I would make -- to follow the uncomfortable path of the artist or the easy path of the sycophant. Many writers and artists, including some of my closest colleagues, would jump at the chance to work for The Great Vomito and make a great deal of money for doing the most simple-minded work. They would never admit this, of course. No. Those in my immediate circle have all expressed their contempt for The Great Vomito. However, when a certain local writer known to us all -- not even a mediocre writer; a positively *dreadful* one! -- was given a fantastically lucrative job in The Great Vomito's organization, they were stung with envy.

We are essentially in the same boat, my fellow artists and I. The question of The Great Vomito's presence in this city has become a profound existential problem. How should we deal with it? It has been suggested to me that we should just ignore The Great Vomito -- in effect, pretend he isn't there. Imagine! One might as well pretend the sun isn't there! No, that simply won't do. How can we as artists ignore a force that has already altered our lives? Art must be

rooted in human experience, not pretense, in order to flourish. It has also been suggested that we try to steal the public's interest away from The Great Vomito by redoubling our efforts and making our work so sublime that they will forget all about him. Well, I hardly know how to reply politely to such a naive idea. We were already hanging on by our fingernails, as it were, before the advent of The Great Vomito. Since then a few of us have already fallen into the abyss, and the rest of us may follow eventually. My most beloved colleague, a poet whose works make me want to tear my hair out in ecstasy, cleans toilets part-time to support himself and has been living on cold sandwiches for years. He used to labor at his poems in the belief that if he achieved perfection the public would somehow notice. But seeing the public's galvanic response to The Great Vomito has shattered his illusions and, I regret to say, so demoralized him that he has sold his typewriter and now spends his free time taking long walks and throwing stones at pigeons. "Why bother to write poetry with *him* around?" he says. Which brings us to another proposed solution to the problem: to just lie low until The Great Vomito leaves and then pick up where we left off. Unfortunately, The Great Vomito seems in no great hurry to leave, and what else are we to do if not continue the only work for which we have any talent? The paradox of Art is that it is the path of our own choosing through hell, yet, according to our faith, it is the only path to heaven.

I thought I had solved the problem logically and analytically when I decided the only thing to do was to move -- preferably far away. I had gone so far as to pack my bags to set out to find a place to live in another city. But on my way to the bus depot I was stricken -- and I use that word deliberately -- by the ineffably poignant memories of my arrival in this city so long ago. I felt then that my true, destined life had just begun, and I saw everything with new eyes -- every street, every alley, every building, every tree -- all the things that were to become the familiar terrain of my new world. How could I leave all that behind now? How could I leave behind one particular quarter whose old and ungracious streets I used to walk when I wanted to clear my head and let my soul spill out into the earth and sky, as in a painting by Van Gogh? (It was on one such excursion that I stepped behind a dilapidated shed and, making sure that no one was watching,

got on my knees and kissed the weathered wood as an act of gratitude for being alive.) It is true, of course, that there are a great many places in the world where people can live happily, but destiny, through subtle and incomprehensible forces, leads the artist to his own place, and to leave one's destined place is to wander into limbo. Therefore, my deepest instincts on this occasion rebelled against my carefully thought-out plan and pulled me back to unpack my bags, lie down with a cold cloth over my face, and pray to find courage.

If I accept things as they are -- that is to say, that there is little prospect of being rid of The Great Vomito and little prospect of being appreciated as long as he's around -- I can continue to live. Life may be far more difficult, but no one prevents me from doing my work. And after all, it is the work itself that matters, not my prosperity or comfort. I want it to exist long after I am dead. So I must simply endure The Great Vomito's presence like one doomed to suffer perpetually from an incurable ailment that is not in itself fatal. And as pervasive and loud as his presence is, there are still a few places where I can go to escape from it, like the path at the bottom of a certain ravine, where my heavy soul can unburden itself and flit like a bird from branch to branch among the trees of winter, where there is not even the noise of passing cars, and where only the barely glimpsed tops of distant skyscrapers and transmitting towers are there to remind me of The Great Vomito.

THE MOST IMPORTANT STORY EVER WRITTEN  
ABOUT GARY, INDIANA

Gary, Indiana. It's real, but to some it's like a dream. Great cities are like that. So are great stories.

I was flying over the Midwest, watching the patchwork landscape roll by beneath me. As Michigan rolled away, I could scarcely remember what I had been doing there, except that I had been there for some time and that I had walked down many tree-lined streets and stood under lampposts at night, wondering about the future and the meaning of life. Everything mundane had gone down the memory hole, and I was left with only general impressions -- a tone, a smell of wet autumn leaves, an unidentifiable sound dying away in the distance.

Now I was flying over Indiana. Ever since I had left Michigan, all I could think of was...GARY, INDIANA. THE PLACE OF MY DESTINY. I wondered, *Where will we land?* I wondered this because I couldn't remember where I was heading except that it was somewhere in Indiana. The noise of the plane was soothing -- the dull drone of engines and the hiss of the air outlet over my head. I asked the stewardess, "Where will we land?"

She looked at me oddly for a moment. I think she thought I meant to say *when*, not *where*. "We'll be landing in Gary in about fifteen minutes."

"Gary? We're going to Gary?" I responded joyfully. "Oh, I'm so glad! I was hoping for Gary!"

She smiled, apparently believing I was making a little joke. BUT THIS WAS NO JOKE. THIS WAS MY LIFE, MY DESTINY. I WOULD BE LANDING SOON IN...GARY, INDIANA.

And what would I be doing in Gary? I would be going to college there. I had already been to college, but as I said before, my memory of the mundane had been lost, as if in a dream. Therefore, I would go to another college. I would go to whatever college they had in Gary.

Next to me a grey-suited man sat reading the airline's



magazine. He looked well-informed, so I asked him, "What college do they have in Gary?"

He compressed his lips in thought for a moment and then replied, "It's Indiana University Northwest."

"Sounds good. I'll go there."

He, too, looked at me oddly, as if I were making a joke, but he didn't say anything. When people say weird things on airplanes, you should never press them to elaborate. They could be dangerous lunatics carrying guns or bombs, and you don't want to set them off (the people, I mean, not the bombs). They could have a short fuse. It's best to assume they're joking. Just smile and be pleasant. Don't give them the idea that you're afraid to be sitting next to them. Just get to your destination, say good-bye politely, go your own way...and for God's sake, don't look back! This is the philosophy I always follow, and I recommend it to you. I occasionally like to reach out to the stupid world and try to give constructive advice, so don't hold this digression against me.

I closed my eyes as we landed, as I didn't want the first view of a perhaps commonplace municipal airport to prejudice me with regard to what I knew instinctively would be a thrilling experience. I deplaned with my head down, following the feet of the person ahead of me, trusting him implicitly all the way to the baggage area. For the life of me, I couldn't recall what luggage I was traveling with, so I stood back until the crowd thinned out, then looked at the remaining pieces of luggage. I found a rather feminine little turquoise suitcase with a name tag that had my name misspelled in such a way as to make a phonetic pun. Someone had obviously packed this bag for me. Or had I done it myself?

Outside, I asked a porter how to get to "IU," and he gestured toward a battered old van marked *Indiana Univ. Limo Service*. There were already several young fellows seated inside. I paid my fare and got in. I said hello to the other fellows, and some conversation ensued. One of them was a black guy named Tuffy Bennett. He said he was on a tennis scholarship, but I thought he had the wrong build for it. He looked more like a wrestler. He asked me what my major was. I said I didn't know because I hadn't actually enrolled yet. "Where you gonna room?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "I don't know the town at all."

"I'll take you over to the Registrar's office. You can



probably still enroll. They don't give you too much hassle here. They're pretty cool."

"Good."

"I'm living in a rooming house close to campus. It's a little crowded, but if you need a place short-term, you can try it out. I'll take you over there afterwards."

"Thanks."

"Oh, and don't ever call Gary a town," he said with a smile. "The correct word is city. Muncie is a town. Gary is a city."

"Oh, thanks for telling me....But it's not a big city, is it? No offense."

"It's big enough....Where you from?"

"Where am I from? Uh...." And for a moment I couldn't remember. "Long Island," I said at last. "Long Island, New York."

"Oh, Long Island. It's all Jews there, ain't it?"

"Uh...yeah, some. Not all. Maybe in some spots, I guess."

"You don't look like a Jew."

"No...I'm...." I hesitated, and then for no reason at all, I said, "I'm a duck."

"A duck?" Tuffy smiled and then started chuckling.

"That's funny." He chuckled occasionally all the way to the campus. "A duck. That's very funny. I like that," he kept saying.

The Registrar's office was a shabby, poorly-lit office with a bare wooden floor, bare walls with one grimy window, an ugly old desk, and some file cabinets. The Registrar was a thin, nervous man (he shook his foot constantly) who had a big ash tray in front of him filled with sunflower seed shells. He ate seeds the whole time we talked. I apologized for just showing up without so much as a letter of inquiry or any documentation. He shrugged and said it was okay. I told him I just wanted to sign up for a course. I wasn't too fussy. I just wanted to get into the swing of things -- new town, new school, the chaos of the unknown and all that. He plopped a big catalogue in front of me. It looked like a department store catalogue. The pages were crowded with incomprehensible ads for courses -- pictures of '50s-style people posing unnaturally while holding household objects, with words like "Super!", "Dynamic!", and "Zippy!" superimposed at all angles.

The centre section contained numerous sheets of perforated stamps of various colors. Each stamp had the name of a course and the fee. I didn't see any normal subjects. There were subjects like *Theology Eels*, *Cement Criticism*, and *Dogmatic Pastry Engines*. The simplest-sounding courses were *Spain* and *Electrical*, but I still didn't know what they meant. The Registrar let me browse at my leisure as he kept eating sunflower seeds. "Take my advice and eat 'em," he remarked. "You'll see."

"Okay, I'll do that," I replied. I picked out a purple stamp that read *French Political Linoleum*. \$273. "What's this about?"

"It tells you on the back."

I turned the page over and read the back of the stamp: "*Linoleum workers in France have been influenced by political theories. Learn how, and what this portends for the future. Go for it! -- Prof. Farber.*" I said to the Registrar, "Okay, I'll try this one. Do I take the stamp out?"

"Yeah. Here's a scissors." He handed me a pair of manicure scissors. "I'll just initial the back of the stamp. How do you want to pay for that?"

"Visa?"

"Yeah, fine." He made out the charge slip and initialed my stamp. "That course already started, but you can catch the rest of it." He gave me the classroom number, which he explained was a makeshift classroom in the basement of a Baptist church.

"Is there a textbook?" I asked.

"Just get it from the instructor. It's part of our 'Beyond Thinking' series. We write 'em ourselves. Saves money." I got up to leave.

"Get your hair cut. This is a very straight school. A word to the wise."

"Yes, sir."

"Want some seeds?" He held out the bag.

"No, thanks."

"Well, you can get 'em everywhere. Don't forget to eat 'em."

"Yes, sir."

Tuffy was waiting for me outside the office. When I came out, he escorted me to his rooming house. The rooming house looked like a condemned building. Beside the house there were

four very old fridges lying on their sides, the doors removed. They were coated on the inside with some sort of filth much worse than mildew. In the barren front yard a lawn nigger and a pink flamingo had been welded together in a position suggesting a deviant sex act.

Tuffy went upstairs and knocked on the landlady's door, but she wasn't in. When we went to his room on the ground floor, we discovered four other guys already there. The entire room was cluttered with mattresses. The four of them had all been in bed, although it was the middle of the day. "What're you guys doing in my room?" asked Tuffy with controlled anger.

"We rent here," said one of them in a foreign accent.

Tuffy remarked to me, "She did it again." It seemed that the landlady had put these four guys in Tuffy's room while he was away. When he explained this to them, they said not to worry, we would sort it all out tomorrow. In the meantime they had to get their sleep as they were astronomy students and had to get to bed early in order to get up at night and study the stars.

"What do you want to do?" Tuffy asked me.

"I don't know. Look for another place tomorrow, I guess."

"I'll help you. I sort of feel responsible."

So Tuffy also got undressed for bed. I got undressed and lay down on a thin mattress in the corner. Pretty soon everything was quiet except for a bit of traffic and a few planes overhead. Sunlight seeped in through the thin curtains. The room was nothing more than an unadorned box with not even a picture on the walls. The walls were a dingy beige with some brown splotches or stains. I couldn't go to sleep because it was too quiet. I need a dull noise like a fan or heater or air conditioner in the background to get to sleep.

After about a half hour I could hear one of the foreign guys jacking off. It was pretty loud. Did he think we were all sound asleep, or didn't he care? I was very embarrassed. I crushed the pillow around my head and thought about French Political Linoleum and earning a degree at IU Northwest and the rich sun of Destiny going down on the fabulous, thrilling, mysterious town of Gary. *City* of Gary, sorry. As day turned to night, I drifted into a kind of nervous lethargy, if there is such a thing. My brain was nervous, but my body was

lethargic. I composed a real good song in my head about Mr. Potato Head and another one about living in a shopping centre. Believe me, they were wonderful songs, and in an alternate universe they could have been very successful, but I forgot all the lyrics.

Around dawn I got up and found only Tuffy there, making an instant coffee on a hot plate. I couldn't remember the astronomy students leaving, so I must have fallen asleep after all.

There was no kitchen, just the hot plate and a little wooden cupboard on the floor. The bathroom, which was down the hall, was a closet-sized affair with a toilet, sink, and a shower only a thin person could get into. I wondered how Tuffy managed.

After I'd washed up a bit, Tuffy served me a coffee and a donut. I said I didn't think this room was such a good place. Even a poor student ought to do a little better than this. "You're right, man," he agreed. "That landlady is the worst. What do you say we look for a place together."

"Yeah, let's do that."

We went out and got a newspaper and looked through the ads. Tuffy picked an address not too far away, and we walked over there. I left my little suitcase behind because I had discovered that it contained a child's clothing, not my own.

The building we found was a very odd structure -- wide but with little depth -- sort of like a facade for a movie set. It had two doors, both in front. We went up to one of them and knocked. There was no answer. Looking through the glass pane in the door, I saw what looked like a hallway going across but nothing else, suggesting that the structure had the dimensions of a railroad car, with the two doors merely opening into the long side of an old-fashioned hall of nicely polished wood everywhere and with a few little tables with empty vases on doilies. Out of curiosity, I opened the door and went in. The view confirmed my first impression: the structure was just an enclosed hall turned sideways, leading nowhere. However, I did notice an open section of wall near the end, facing what would be the backyard. The opening appeared to have been broken down by force, with broken paneling lying among scattered bricks. Tuffy was right behind me as I headed toward the opening to see what was behind this weird structure. "Are we gonna live here?" I heard Tuffy ask, but I did-



n't reply.

When I got to the breach in the wall, I looked out and saw what I can only describe as two long concrete trenches or bays, sort of like for a subway, or those deep bays they have in some service stations. They were about five feet deep and five feet wide and ran parallel through the barren dirt of the backyard, straight back from the "house" to a concrete wall. They had some junk in them -- scrap metal and garbage. A few wooden planks had been thrown across the top for walking over them. Suddenly, in the trench closest to me I caught a glimpse of something that was either a bloated naked body with blood on it or an enormous soggy french fry with ketchup. It was featureless, like a pillow, and I was only seeing it from the "waist" down, so it was mainly by intuition that I was operating at this moment. I pulled back, pushing Tuffy away from the opening. "Don't look!" I said. "There's a body!" I turned around to the other door of the house and opened it to get out. On the steps below were about twenty puppies, all alike. They looked like so many faceless grubs without eyes. I thought, *These puppies won't bite me.* I stepped down, placing my feet carefully among them, and then I felt sharp claws digging into my ankles. They felt like cat claws, but I couldn't see what was grabbing me. I shook my feet and only freed myself after much effort. Tuffy came out behind me. He didn't say a word about the body -- whether he'd looked or not, or whether it was just a big french fry. It's possible he was just being tactful.

I said to Tuffy, "I think I'm having a dream."

"Oh, yeah? Am I in it?" he asked with genuine interest.

I didn't understand what he meant, so I just said, "I don't know. Maybe."

Tuffy remarked that the building was unlike anything he'd ever seen before, and he wondered who owned all the puppies. I said, "I think it's like a secret lab where they do experiments on people. I think they placed the ad in the paper to lure people in and do things to them."

"Well, if that's the case, we sure outsmarted them, didn't we?"

"Yeah, we outsmarted them."

Tuffy asked if I wanted to try another ad and look at another place. I said, "I'm sorry, Tuffy, but I don't think Gary is going to work out for me. I thought I was supposed to

find something here, but I think maybe it was just a detour that Fate put in my path. I think what I probably ought to do now is just get back on a plane and leave."

"Aw, that's too bad. And we didn't even get a chance to play tennis."

"I don't play it much."

"I'm going to be a pro."

"That's nice. So maybe I'll see you on TV someday."

"Yeah, and maybe I'll see you on TV, too," said Tuffy.

We shook hands. I asked him how to get back to the airport, and he said I could take the campus limo but a cab would be faster. He pointed me toward a main street where I could get a cab quickly.

"Hey, what about your suitcase? It's back at the rooming house."

"Just give all that stuff away. It doesn't fit me anyway."

So I walked in the direction Tuffy had indicated, and I thought rather sadly that I had hardly seen anything of Gary. And I never even had one class of French Political Linoleum, which I'd already paid for. The sky had clouded over and looked threatening, as it often did in my worst dreams, and the city took on a gloomy, run-down look. If this was supposed to be my destiny, what sort of destiny specifically? Perhaps it was only supposed to make sense from a "higher" point of view.

Just then on the other side of the street I saw the Registrar walking a dog. It was a big Airedale, the very breed of dog I hate the most, and it was dragging him along at a brisk pace. The Registrar, who was dressed in a loud Hawaiian shirt and brown pants, allowed himself to be pulled along by the dog. We saw each other, and I felt embarrassed. I smiled and said, "I'm leaving."

"Couldn't hack it, eh?" he replied from across the street with a clear suggestion of contempt. "Well, maybe you're better off in the steel mills." His dog stopped over a sewer grate and squatted down to shit. "When I was your age I was doing plane geometry!"

I couldn't think of any reply, so I just kept walking. When I looked back a minute later, he was gone.

Just as I reached Grant St. it started to rain heavily. I thought this was no weather for flying. I would take a

train instead. I hailed a cab and asked to be taken to the train station. The cabbie was an East Indian. He had a cassette on with the music of his country, and one of the songs affected me in a strange way. Weird images of someone else's childhood came into my head -- odd-looking houses and streets, strange smells, people speaking a strange language. I shouted telepathically at the cabbie, *Are you doing that?* But there was no reaction.

At the station I walked up to a wicket and, for absolutely no reason, I said to the clerk, "I want to go to Hibbing, Minnesota."

I thought the clerk would either laugh or tell me to get lost, but evidently railroad ticket agents are used to such odd requests, for he simply took out a map from a pigeonhole and studied it for a few moments, his finger tracing a path. "I can get you as far as Duluth, young fella," he said in a friendly manner. "It'd be quicker to fly, of course."

"No, it's got to be the train," I said.

He made out my ticket, which I had to charge because I didn't have enough cash.

I did absolutely nothing for two hours while waiting for the train. I just sat in the waiting room. A serious-looking man in a clerical collar stood under the clock holding a placard above his head with the name RUDY HORLOBOINGYA as he watched each group of new arrivals.

Once on the train, I sat across the aisle from two handsome, well-dressed couples who were obviously traveling together. I listened in on their conversation, but it was about people I didn't know. One of the women had very big breasts. I imagined being in bed with her, squeezing her breasts and doing other things I prefer not to mention.

By chance, I happened to glance at my ticket and noticed something strange. It was dated the 27th. I was sure today was the 26th. I got out my airline ticket stub from the day before and saw that it was dated the 25th. Right. I remembered quite specifically that I flew on the 25th. That was yesterday. I stayed only one night in Gary, and today I was on the train, so the ticket had to be wrong. When the conductor came by, I pointed the error out to him, and he replied, "This *is* the 27th."

"No. Yesterday was the 25th."

"No, sir. Yesterday was the 26th. Today's the 27th," he

insisted with a friendly chuckle. "A train conductor is never wrong about the date. The same with time," he added, tapping the face of his watch for emphasis. "We're more accurate than anyone."

I knew he was right and felt a surge of panic. "I've lost a day! It's gone! I've lost a day *just like that!*"

He chuckled again and patted my shoulder. "It happens. You'll make it up, don't worry," he said, apparently not taking me literally. He punched my ticket and continued on his way.

I sat back, staring at the train ticket and the airplane ticket. Yes, railroads didn't make mistakes about dates. But neither did airlines. As the train pulled along out of Gary, I wondered, *What happened to the 26th? I left an entire day behind in Gary.* It made me think of witches who steal a lock of hair or an article of clothing from a victim to put a curse on him. Someone could have stolen a day from me....I watched the bleakness of Gary go by, framed in the window. I didn't want to forget any more, but already I could sense that my memories of the city were evaporating out of my head. I was forcing myself to reconstruct them, but the only vivid thing I was sure of was the body that looked like a giant french fry. I wrote a memo on a piece of paper: "*Body or French Fry. Gary, Ind.*"

The lowering clouds and the rain seemed to press the smoke from the stacks back down over the city. It occurred to me that I was seeing everything outside the window in shades of grey. Only the inside of the train had any primary colors.

The couples across the aisle were now disputing a philosophical point. The two men were arguing against the two women.. One of the men said, "Things generally get worse as time goes on," and his friend agreed.

One of the women said, "No, things generally get better in the long run," and her friend agreed.

On an impulse, I plunged into their debate. "I think things generally stay the same," I said, as if I knew what I was talking about.

They looked at me in surprise and then smiled. "You could be right," said one of the men.

The woman with the big breasts added, "That's reasonable."



I stood up as if to stretch my legs and leaned against one of their backrests. The big-breasted woman fascinated me. So did the possibility that there were mysterious forces in the universe that were flowing through me at this very moment and that I might have been chosen as their earthly instrument.

"Going to Chicago?" asked one of the men.

"No. Hibbing, Minnesota. By way of Duluth." I could feel an aura enveloping me -- an aura of power and destiny. "I had the time of my life in Gary, but now I've got to move on."

"I don't care for Gary," said the woman I desired. "Nothing interesting ever happens there." The others agreed.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. I just lost my mind in Gary," I said, sensing a sword-like glint in my eyes and feeling just a tad psychopathic.

After a moment's hesitation, the four of them laughed. They assumed I had made a little joke.



Swami Prabhupada  
(by Furpo K., artist)

## HARE KRISHNA WEEKEND

The Swami was engaged in instructing his pupils when he sat down in the flowery meadow. He spread his glorious saffron robes about his legs and adopted a pose of serene enlightenment and godliness, unaware that he had just sat on a huge dog turd. He then expounded to us at great length about the limitations of the earthly senses.

"Tell me, oh Great Weasel Face," I inquired at last, "did you learn all that in school?"

"The so-called educators are all rascals!" he replied, looking at us sternly. "There are none so blind as those who cannot see."

"You're telling me?" I muttered.

Meanwhile, Bruce was sniffing the air and looking around in puzzlement.

\*

In the summer of 1976, my retarded brother, Furpo, the now-famous artist\*, and I accepted an invitation to visit an Ashram (rural commune) of the Hare Krishnas in a lovely and peaceful setting near the town of Scrofula, Ontario. Our neighbors, Bruce, Keith, and Wilma, had been trying to get us to go with them on one of their weekend visits, but we had resisted all their blandishments until free food was mentioned. At that time, Furpo and I were down to half a package

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\*For the benefit of readers who have been following Furpo's career indirectly through my books, I should explain that this was a few months before he went to work for the Workers' Compensation Board as a claims adjudicator. (As of this writing he is a supervisor.) His most recent collection of drawings, "Screams of My Id," at the Gallery Moos on Yorkville (Jan. '90) quickly sold out at high prices despite a poor review in *The Globe and Mail*.

of baloney and a jug of Kool-Aid. (He was waiting for a cheque from a bondage magazine that had accepted some of his drawings, and I had made only \$30 all year selling filler items to a crackpot occult magazine.)

Early on a Friday afternoon we packed into Bruce's VW van for the four-hour drive. Bruce, Keith, and Wilma chanted "Hare Krishna" almost the entire time, and had I been in a position to grab the steering wheel, I might have conked the lads out with a tire iron. Low blood sugar makes me psychopathic and dangerous. (I only mention this in case I should need a good legal defense in the future.) Furpo had glued himself to Wilma, whose ripe body he desired. He knew that the three roommates lived platonically, and he therefore assumed that Wilma was secretly starved for hot pepperoni. My brother may be retarded, but he has healthy drives. What's more, he gets laid more than I do because women assume he's harmless. He soon managed to insinuate his cheek into Wilma's ample cleavage as he pretended to chant along.

Our three neighbors were relatively new Hare Krishnas and had the predictable zeal of converts. Bruce had found Hare Krishna after hard drugs, Christianity, survivalism, and the management training program of Canadian Tire, in that order. Keith had come to Hare Krishna via the armed forces, Orthodox Judaism, the stock market, and psychoanalysis. And Wilma's path to Hare Krishna had started with the Girl Guides, prostitution, the Ontario College of Art, and a live-in relationship with a Mafia gangster. All of them assured me repeatedly that Krishna Consciousness had made their previously fragmented lives complete, filled a psychological void, simplified their social relations, and cured all stomach and bowel complaints.

It is difficult to convey to the reader the true quality of this ineffably super-nifty weekend in a single continuous narrative. So many thoughts. So many images. Breakdown of language. Semiotics...structural phenomenology of words/the map/reality/the map is not the topography/i cn hrdly thnk wrds n ppr/deconstruction my eyeballs scream can you hear yourself bleeding bleed bleed bleed the disintegration a false heaving of full kidneys in the nerves when you are required to carry what carries you and each bone blown up by electric plates the arms longer and longer the exhausted state of the gorilla obliged still to answer t pss th slt o



m nt kddng....Ahem, sorry. I was driving at something but ran off the road for a moment. Oh, yes...I hope the reader will understand my methodology of discontinuous sections in its true light -- that is, my desperate attempt to be a post-modern intellectual. This may be misinterpreted by my detractors as a simple lack of editorial skill, but they cannot understand what it's like to live inside my head, which I have done since birth and shall continue to do for an indefinite time henceforwardly.

\*

In the late afternoon, my first view upon arriving in the driveway of the Ashram is of a very old man with a cane, whose countenance is a perfect blank. He is petting a goat that is tied to a tree. The old man is chanting "Hare Krishna." The goat is chewing on a cardboard box. Somewhere above sounds the raucous call of a crow. A swarm of gnats besets us temporarily, but Bruce and Wilma chant them away. Already I can feel something profound stirring deep within me. I recall suddenly the baloney sandwich I had for breakfast and how green it was around the edges -- as green as the leaf of the sacred lotus, and equally fragrant. Or perhaps I exaggerate.

\*

Although faint from starvation after the long drive, my brother and I were required to watch a slide show before dinner. A number of residents and a few other visitors sat on the bare wooden floor of the main house. Swami Prabhupada (full title His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada; addressed by his students as "Swamiji," and by his intimate friends as "Boopy," "Big P," or "Bopper") sat in the middle of the semicircle into which we had arranged ourselves. I was struck at once by the nobility of his bearing, the way he held his head high, the way his eyes seemed to peer out of nearly closed eyelids, and the scent of exotic oils which almost masked the natural smells of his body. Someone had put on a record of Indian music as background to the slides. We watched a succession of slides depicting Ashrams and temples. One temple was next door to a Burger King. Another appeared to have an unusual number of police cars parked in front of it. When a slide depicting a very beautiful, well-stacked woman flashed by, Furpo whispered to me, "*Dig those knockers!*"

to which I replied loudly enough for all to hear, "That's my kind of temple!" The Swami was not amused, and no one else laughed either.

"The control of the sexual impulse is necessary for spiritual enlightenment," he declared.

"You mean you get to know God better if you're horny all the time?" I asked, perfectly deadpan. Several of the residents tittered.

The Swami replied, "Sex beyond what is necessary for procreation is to be discouraged." I noticed one of the young women glancing at my brother and me nervously. Her look seemed to say: *Take me away from all this and fuck me till my brains fall out.*

We watched a great many slides depicting potters and weavers at work. It appeared that every member of the Krishna society was either a potter or a weaver. In response to my comment on this, Swami Prabhupada informed me that such basic skills were not only a joy to their practitioners but also an aid to spiritual enlightenment.

"No computers, eh?" I remarked.

"Only to keep track of the money that comes in," the Great Master replied.

After what seemed like an eternity, we were led at last to the refectory to eat. A large buffet table was set out with an assortment of foods I couldn't identify.

"What? No meat?" said Furpo. "I have to have burnt animal flesh."

"We eat no meat," said one of the men. "Meat is death... Why don't you try one of these...or some of this...."

I was fascinated. One bowl contained something like green mush sprinkled with brown flecks. Another contained what looked like tennis balls covered with tomato sauce. I opted for what I thought was a deep-fried egg roll. It wasn't.

"Would you like to know what's in that?" asked our friend enthusiastically.

"No!" I said quickly. I managed to get a couple of mouthfuls down with some difficulty. I then had a desperate craving for a cold beer. (The reader should be feeling very sorry for me by now.)

Bruce, Keith, and Wilma stuffed themselves on everything. My brother had a bit of plain rice and all the sliced

oranges. We washed down the sumptuous repast with weak tea.

I thought a good smoke might ease my hunger, but when I took out my pipe, several wagging fingers prevented me from lighting up.

It was then that I experienced a moment of true enlightenment, which I could not have experienced anywhere else but at an Ashram. I realized that there are exactly three things necessary to sustain human life:

1. meat
2. alcohol
3. tobacco

\*

Late that night I was stricken with diarrhea. On my way to the washroom I spotted Wilma tiptoeing into the Swami's private quarters. I was deeply touched by the Great One's selflessness in making himself available to his followers even in the dead of night.

During another of my calls of nature, Furpo disappeared from our room and did not show up again until dawn.

\*

The call of a pigeon awakens me. Looking out the window, I see the Morning Star in the east. In the yard below, an old woman is scraping the earth with the whisk of a broom with no handle. As the dust rises around her, she bends low over the ground, whisking away while chanting "Hare Krishna." Around and around she goes, brushing the dirt and leaves. Her actions strike me as quintessentially simple and gracious. What better way to serve God than to arise before dawn and go out and brush the ground with the whisk of a broom?

\*

"Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead, there is no nescience. As the Gita itself informs us, 'When our brains are enlightened by the knowledge that destroys nescience, we are filled with the light that reveals everything, as the sun lights the corners of the universe. Even when it is night, we see day.'"

With these simple yet profound words the Swami began his daily lecture to his students and visitors. I could see around me many faces that were utterly vacant -- a clear sign

that the devotee has emptied his mind to make room for the wisdom of the Gita. I was deeply moved. It is not every day that one is privileged to see nescience destroyed. The last time for me was back in July of 1973, I think, although on that occasion nescience may only have been wounded.

"The sky is like a meadow upon which a cow grazes. We cannot see the part of the meadow that is hidden by the cow. So, too, the cloud that covers part of the sky conceals the part that cannot be seen. The illusion of reality is like that of a great cow blocking out part of the sky. The spiritual meadow and spiritual sky are three times larger than is the great obscuring cow. This is why nescience must be destroyed...."

"I'll kill those Nessians if they come anywhere near me," growled my brother, Furpo. "Who are those Nessians anyway?"

"They're sort of like Ukrainians," I said in a hushed voice.

"I'll kill 'em. I'll kill 'em all."

"Shh."

"...So we must not be deceived by the great cow of Science, which is presented as the total reality. In this way is modern man deceived. The rascal scientist says, 'See here! Look at me! I have all knowledge! I have explained everything with my fancy instruments!' But he knows nothing of Krishna, therefore he is an imbecile. And the modern philosopher is like the frog. One day somebody came to see Dr. Frog in his well and informed him of the existence of the Atlantic Ocean. So Dr. Frog said, 'Oh, is it bigger than this well?' You see, he could not comprehend it...." The students laughed at this. Krishna humor at its best. "...All these rascals and poor frogs shall inevitably be crushed by their own great cows of pretension...."

The students and visitors seated around me hung on the Swami's every word. One young woman seemed hypnotized. Even the chickens standing nearby eyed the Great Master fixedly. I myself kept staring at his bald head and pondered the cosmic question, *Why don't bald men suffer from dandruff?*

We were sitting beneath a tree a short distance from the main house of the Ashram. I could see the little children of the commune playing naked in the dirt, untainted by the illusory pleasures of materialistic suburbia. These were God's children as much as anyone else's, although only their parents



could claim a tax credit. They were at one with nature, with all the smelly animals of the field and their bacteria-laden droppings. They would grow up in the ways of Krishna, and when they were older they would spend five afternoons a week on downtown city streets asking passers-by for money "to help poor children," meaning others like themselves. It was a good life -- simple, and with its own self-contained logic. My brother and I had had spiritually deprived childhoods by comparison. We had our own rooms, with a TV and stereo, and could eat any junk food we wanted. Our favorite pastimes were bribing neighborhood girls with candy to pull down their panties and throwing rocks at squirrels.

"...A person who makes an abortion will be put into a womb in his next life to be aborted as punishment. As many babies as he has killed, that many lifetimes will he be brought back to die as an infant in a womb. He will never see daylight. The same applies to eaters of meat. If you eat meat, you will come back as an animal to be slaughtered for food. This is the law of nature, which we call *karma*."

I interrupted Swami Prabhupada at this point. "Excuse me, Chief, but can we choose the form in which we will return to earth?"

"Yes," he replied. "At least, we can influence our future form by the way we conduct our lives. Do you know how you would like to return to earth?"

"Yes. As a Scotsman. Actually, any sort of WASP will do, but preferably a Scotsman." The others gave me a weird look.

A student raised his hand. "Swamiji, why can we not understand the universe through scientific means?"

I echoed his question: "Yes, Divine Yogurt-Head, why can we not understand the universe through scientific means?"

The Wise Man glared at me for a moment before he replied to the student. "The rascal scientists can see millions and millions of stars through their telescopes, but they cannot approach them. The rascals speak of traveling to other planets, yet they cannot approach the moon planet, which is the nearest...."

"Excuse me, oh Great Gorgonzola, but the Americans landed on the moon in 1969." His students looked at me with a mixture of shock and amusement.

"Perhaps," said the Swami icily, piercing me with a

dagger look. "And perhaps not. The rascals are capable of any deception....In any case, I meant 'approach' in the sense of everyday travel."

"Oh, I see."

"The airplanes of the material world are but toys compared to the spiritual airplanes. In the Second Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* we are told about them. The living entities there are all liberated, and when they fly in their airplanes they look as beautiful as lightning."

"Do they have cars in heaven?" asked Furpo.

"The Vedic literature does not mention cars specifically, but if there are spiritual cars, they are vastly superior to earthly ones."

"Are they as fast as a Corvette Stingray?" Furpo persisted.

"I do not know this Corvette Stingray you speak of, but I can assure you the Corvette Stingrays of the spiritual world far surpass the ones you know. They would go faster -- as fast as thought itself. Yet they would not pollute the spiritual world, for they would be powered by the expansive radiation of the Lord, not gasoline. And there would be no traffic jams or accidents. All is perfection on Goloka Vrndavana."

"Goloka what?" Furpo and I asked in one voice.

"Goloka Vrndavana -- the highest planet in the self-luminous spiritual world. It is the lotus-like abode of Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There Lord Krishna enjoys loving exchanges with His pure devotees. He is capable of more love than all the human beings who have ever lived, hence He can fill them all with His love."

I remarked to Furpo a bit too loudly, "I'll bet his cock is even bigger than yours." A young woman overheard me and fainted.

The Swami eyed me contemptuously for a moment. Then he cleared his throat and addressed two serious chaps sitting close to him -- evidently two of his more advanced students. "*Payum yamasya mitrasya parimoksasya narada himsaya nirrtar mrtyor nirayasya gudan smrtah....Who would like to translate?*"

The two lads raised their hands at once. Swami Prabhupada nodded at one of them, who promptly parroted the translation: "O Narada, the evacuating outlet of the universal form of the Lord is the abode of the controlling deity of death, Mitra, and the evacuating hole and the rectum of the Lord is

the place of envy, misfortune, death, hell, etc."

"Very good." The Swami looked at me. "Something for you to think about." He got up. "That is enough for now, my children. We will speak again this evening." When he turned around, there was a big dog-shit stain on his robe.

Furpo said to me, "Hey, find me that book he quoted from. I want to read some more about the Lord's asshole."

\*

Little children, some naked, play in the dust of the *pa-rīkrama* trail, the trail along the perimeter of Vrndavana. Playfully they pour sand on one another. A donkey, snorting and guffawing, rolls in the sand to scratch its back. A renunciant offering repeated obeisances lies prostrate on the ground. Bent old widows pass by with walking sticks. And dogs howl from the rooftops, mischievous monkeys run, hogs eat filth in the riverside sewage. But even all this seems peaceful. It is not the violent industrial city; it is, rather, a place where nitwits can believe they are in paradise.

\*

At dinner I tried a dish called *prasadam*, which contains hot chilies. As I writhed about the floor gasping for air, Swamiji asked, "Is it too hot?" He interpreted my shriek as an affirmative reply. So he brought me a tiny teacup with some milk, and then he took some rice off my plate and took a piece of banana and crushed it all up together with his fingers and said, "Here, eat this. It will kill the action of the chilies." I took a mouthful of it and tried to forget about the dirt under his fingernails.

After dinner Furpo contrived to go for a little walk in the woods with one of the young women and thus was absent during the Swami's enlightening lecture on sex.

"From the Lord's genitals originate water, semen, generatives, rains, and the procreators. His genitals are the cause of a pleasure that counteracts the distress of begetting. One would cease to generate altogether if there were not, by the grace of the Lord, a coating, a pleasure-giving substance, on the surface of the generative organs. This substance is not false, however, because it originates from the transcendental body of the Lord...."

All around me, clones with shaved heads were nodding

in understanding.

"...But in the material world it has taken on an aspect of pervertedness on account of material contamination." Swami Prabhupada noticed a girl who was blushing and who seemed ill at ease. "Did you wish to ask a question?"

"Yes, Swamiji....If a woman...this is just a hypothetical case...but if a woman knows she is sterile, then is it perverted for her to have intercourse since there is no possibility of begetting children?"

*Good question*, I thought.

"Yes," replied the Swami. "If intercourse is practiced for any other purpose than procreation, it is a perversion." Then he seemed to catch himself. "Er, on the other hand, the Lord Krishna has been known to cure sterility through the indirect intervention of his transcendental genitals. Perhaps you would like to discuss this with me in private later tonight -- no, better make it tomorrow night, all right?"

"Yes! Thank you, Swamiji!"

A young man asked, "Swamiji, forgive my ignorance, but I wish to ask an explicit question. Is it all right to ask here?"

"Yes, of course. How else can you learn if you don't ask a straight question? We are all mature enough to speak plainly about sex. I understand the problems and anxieties of the young."

The young man cleared his throat nervously and asked, "What I want to know is...just how does a man put his penis into a woman's vagina?"

The Swami shifted on his haunches and frowned slightly. "Let me explain it as clearly as I can....When the Lord descends, the incarnation emanates from Visnu. Maha-Visnu is the original cause of material creation, and from Him Garbhodakasayi-Visnu expands, and then Ksirodakasayi-Visnu. Generally, all the incarnations appearing within this material universe are plenary expansions from Ksirodakasayi-Visnu. Therefore, the business of minimizing the overload of sinful activities on this earth does not belong to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna Himself. But when Krishna appears, all the Visnu expansions also join with Him. Krishna's different expansions, namely Narayana, the quadrupal expansions of Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, as well as the partial plenary expansion of Matsya or the incarnation of



fish, and other yuga-avatars -- that is, incarnations for the millenium -- and the Manvantara-avatars, the incarnations of Manus, all combine together and appear with the body of Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna is the complete whole, and all plenary expansions and incarnations always live with Him....I think that answers your question."

"Yes, Swamiji. Thank you."

There followed a short film titled *Marriage In Krishna*. At an Ashram a young male potter has a conversation with a young female weaver. They smile at each other. They chant "Hare Krishna" together. They hold hands. Next thing, they are dressed for a wedding. There is a lot of eating and singing and dancing. One minute later they are holding a baby. Then they go back to their pottery and weaving. The audience was deeply impressed. It occurred to me that my brother and his "date" were still outside somewhere in the bushes.

After the film the lights were turned on, and the Swami arose and said it was time for some dancing. Some rhythmic music was put on the record player, and the Swami led us in an original dance which someone had dubbed "the Swami step." We formed a line behind him and attempted to mimic his movements, which I found confusing and difficult. Holding his arms above his head with his thumbs barely touching his ears, he would first swing his left foot forward across his right foot, bending his right knee slightly, and then bring it back again in a sweeping motion. Then he would repeat the movement with the right foot across the left, combined with a series of hops, rotating his body 360 degrees. Then he would take two steps forward, bend at the waist, thrust his arms out away from his body and stick his tongue out in ecstasy, then straighten up, bring his arms across his chest, clap his hands behind his buttocks, make two quick hops, bend forward with his arms straight out, and turn his body 90 degrees to the left and back to the right while tapping his right toe on the floor. This is what Bruce had left management training at Canadian Tire for.

Well, all that lewd dancing and sex education put me in a lascivious mood, and I scanned the room for prospects, always hating to be outdone by my retarded brother. I saw one young woman who stood out from the rest by virtue of her being merely ordinary (the others being what I like to refer to as "libido-killers"). She sat on a large cushion with her legs

crossed Indian-style. I sat beside her and engaged her in some simple conversation. Then I accidentally did something rude: I found myself staring at her legs, which were unbelievably hairy.

"You don't like hairy women, do you?" she said, smiling.

"Uh...well...I couldn't help noticing."

"None of us women shave our body hair."

"Why not?"

"It's unnatural. We also don't use any kind of man-made deodorants. They disturb the natural ecology of the armpit."

"I see." I could visualize what her armpits must look like. "But you do bathe."

"Of course we bathe."

"And that doesn't disturb the ecology of the skin," I asked, deadpan.

"No. You see, the body is just like the earth. Rain is good for the earth. But shaving body hair is just as wrong as destroying forests. It's a direct analogy. Nothing that grows in nature should be destroyed except plants used for food."

"What about mowing the lawn?"

"People shouldn't mow lawns. They should keep a cow instead. The cow is a holy animal. The cow eats the grass, and its droppings fertilize the ground, which helps the grass grow. You see, it's a natural cycle. If everyone lived that way, the whole world would come to know Krishna more quickly."

I pretended to ponder the point seriously, then remarked just to provoke her, "Gee, speaking of cows, I could sure go for a hamburger right now."

"If you eat dead meat you'll become dead meat," she said humorlessly.

"I got up. "Well, it's been delightful. Think I'll take a cold shower and read a good book."

My hosts were a step ahead of me on the latter point, for when I went up to my bed I found a stack of literature piled neatly on it, including *The Teachings of Queen Kunti* ("Illuminating outpourings of the soul of a great and saintly woman"), *The Teachings of Lord Kapila* ("A great sage explains how to discriminate between matter and spirit and achieve pure consciousness"), *The Nectar of Instruction* ("How to become a *gosvami*, a master of the mind and senses"), *The Kaliya Illustrated Storybook* ("Krishna subdues a great snake"), *The Gopal*

*Coloring Book* ("Krishna's pastimes as a cowherd boy"), and *Srila Prabhupada's 90-Day Yeast Diet* ("Melts away excess pounds while expanding spiritual consciousness").

Also tucked in among the books was a donation envelope so that I could express my gratitude to my hosts as well as help feed starving children around the world. *So, they got me after all*, I thought. I put five dollars in the envelope out of guilt. That ought to buy enough yeast to reduce a few children to death, and good riddance.

Furpo came in around 10:30, and naturally I was eager to know about his date in the bushes. When he described his exploits with the young Hare Krishna woman, I thought he was exaggerating. "They're all drips, and they're ugly besides. I spoke to one," I said.

"In the dark all cats smell the same," he replied.

"What does that mean?"

"I just made it up. You like it? It means what's the difference, and besides, I've had worse."

"How did you get her to put out?"

"Easy. I let her think I might join the movement....And, well, we're sort of engaged."

"Engaged?"

"I told her if she sucked me off, that would mean we were engaged. So she did."

"I can't believe this."

"Oh, you can believe it. She's coming to Toronto next chance she gets, and she's going to crash with us. I told her I was a serious artist and that I'd like to draw her in the nude....Hey, don't worry, you'll get your chance with her.... By the way, her father is one of the top guys in the Workers' Compensation Board."

It was through this girl that Furpo was to get his entry-level job at the W.C.B. He prolonged the "engagement" until after his probationary period. His "fiancee," however, eventually became fed up with his (and my) unusual sexual requirements and ran off with a motorcycle gang.

\*

The moon shines into my bedroom. I am unable to sleep. I try chanting silently. Suddenly I must go to the washroom. Something I ate.

On the way back I hear voices coming from the private



chambers of the Great Master. I hear his voice saying, "*It is Krishna who penetrates you!*"

The female voice, which sounds familiar, replies, "*Oh! Oh! Yes! Deeper! Deeper!*" She squeals with delight. A few minutes later it sounds as though he is whipping her. She cries out, "*Ow! It hurts!*"

He replies, "*Think of Goloka Vrndavana!*"

Apparently she does, for soon she is saying, "*I love it! I love it!*"

A while later I hear a dog bark. The Great Master's voice is gently encouraging: "*Don't be afraid, child. He can't hurt you.*" After a minute of what sounds like awkward moving around on the bed, I hear the unmistakable *click-click-click* of a camera.

After several more minutes I hear the girl say she's tired. Then things get quiet. Then I hear the sound of a fridge being opened and shut and ice cubes clinking in glasses. I hear the cap of a bottle of liquor being spun open.

After a couple of drinks the Swami asks to be sucked off. "*It will make Lord Krishna happy,*" he says. She obliges.

When it sounds as though the girl is getting ready to leave, I hide behind a curtain. The door opens, and I see her face in the dim light. I should have guessed: it's Wilma, my neighbor. "Good night, Boopy," she says.

\*

Sunday morning. I am awakened by grackles squawking on the window ledge. Although half asleep, I compose this lim-erick:

*Such a lilting song has the grackle,  
More lovely than any hen's cackle,  
Neither shoo-ing nor tapping  
Will shut up its yapping,  
But a blow on the head with a jack'll.*

Looking down into the yard, I see that the Ashram has already come to life. A woman sits on a rope cot while another stands behind her, combing her hair and carefully removing lice without harming them. On a nearby roof, an old man is taking big balls of soft cow dung from a basket, bunching them and patting them down. After baking in the sun, the cow dung patties will serve as fuel for cooking, and the old man will



spend the rest of the day talking to butterflies, making a hat out of shoelaces, and stuffing grass down his shorts.

When I go downstairs I find that the Swami is still sleeping. One of the men says with a straight face, "He works so hard for us, he deserves his rest."

Bruce, Keith, and Wilma look quite fresh, chanting with some other devotees before the deities of Krishna and Balarama. They chant, *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*. I've yet to find out if there's a second verse.

Furpo has already gotten up early for the express purpose of raiding the kitchen. In this enterprise he has been assisted by his paramour from last night. We will take back enough bad food to last us for a few days.

I want to leave as soon as possible, but it's up to my neighbors, so I look for a way to kill some time. There is no TV in the Ashram. There's nothing good on the radio. There's no Sunday paper. There's no dart board, no basketball hoop, no swimming pool, and not even a badminton set. These people make Mormons look exciting. One of the men notices my boredom and suggests I help him groom the goats. I tell him I have a deathly fear of goats because of an unfortunate childhood experience in New York City but that I will watch him do it and keep him company. He does not understand that I have made a joke. The man's name is Drutakarma (formerly Dave). He tells me about a dream he had last night:

"I saw Krishna and Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksestra. Arjuna was inquiring from Krishna, and Krishna was reciting the *Bhagavad-Gita* to him. Then that picture phased out, and the images changed. And there was Swamiji, and I was kneeling in front of him, and the same dialogue was going on. I had the understanding that now is the time, and Swamiji is presenting the same thing as Krishna, and we are all in the position of Arjuna. The dream made it very clear that hearing from Swamiji was as good as hearing from Krishna...." He is grooming the goat absent-mindedly, with a look of either spiritual bliss or simple idiocy radiating from his face. I'm hoping the goat will bite him. "I often dream of Swamiji, and when I awaken I feel strangely refreshed, as if bathed in some unknown balm."

"I think that's wonderful," I reply, suddenly feeling immense pity for the young man's parents. "I also dreamed

of Swamiji."

"Did you really!" exclaims Drutakarma.

"Yes. I was trying to climb the stairs in the Statue of Liberty while wearing roller skates. Swamiji ran after me, surrounded by a white light. Then he turned into a whale. Eggs spewed out of his mouth, and wherever they landed, purple cactuses sprang up. When I reached the top of the stairs, I beheld Queen Kunti in the nude. I was about to kiss her breasts when I awoke."

Drutakarma fairly jumps with excitement. "This is a deeply spiritual dream!"

"I had a feeling you'd say that."

"I believe this is a sign that you should embark on a serious study of the Gita! You really must come back and spend more time with us!"

I stand up and pretend to see someone waving at me from the house. "I think someone wants me. Well, so long." I shake hands with Drutakarma and leave.

\*

On the way home, I made sure I sat beside Wilma. She talked incessantly about Swami Prabhupada and the course of study she intended to follow, which would occupy her for most of her life and entail a lot of private instruction from him. Her voice was getting on my nerves, so to shut her up or at least make her stop for a breath, I placed my hand under her skirt, way up near her crotch. She slapped it away angrily. "Watch it, buster!"

"Isn't this the path to enlightenment?"

"You're such a male chauvinist pig!"

My brother chimed in: "Yeah, Crad, you're such a male chauvinist pig."

Wilma added, "And all you ever think about is sex."

Furpo said, "Yeah, that's all he ever thinks about."

"You only came along to stuff yourself on the free food," Wilma continued.

"Yeah, sex and food. That's my brother."

"You have no capacity for spiritual things," said Wilma.

"That's for sure," Furpo agreed, as he casually laid his head upon her lap and gave her his most innocent retarded smile while looking up at her tits between the buttons of her blouse.

\*

"Beginning from me (Brahma) down to you and Bhava (Siva), all the great sages who were born before you, the demi-gods, the demons, the Nagas, the human beings, the birds, the beasts, as well as the reptiles, etc., and all phenomenal manifestations of the universes, namely the planets, stars, asteroids, luminaries, lightning, thunder, and the inhabitants of the different planetary systems, namely the Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yaksas, Raksas, Bhutaganas, Chagas, Pasus, Pitas, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Caranas, and all other different varieties of living entities, including the birds, beasts, trees and everything that be, are all covered by the universal form of the Lord at all times, namely past, present and future, although He is transcendental to all of them, eternally existing in a form not exceeding nine inches."

Srimad-Bhagavatam  
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## About The Author

Crad Kilodney was born in Mongolia in 1953 to a family of nomadic idiots and became one of the most important writers of his country by the age of ten, mainly on the strength of his 8-page pamphlet, *Good Jokes For Mongolians*. At thirteen, he entered the People's Conservatory of Music in Ulan Bator on a harmonica scholarship and soon mastered the complete works of Richard Wagner. He was later joined in the capital city by his brother, Furpo, a free-lance pickpocket and abortionist. These were happy years, marred only by a tragic bus plunge, of which the two lads were the sole survivors. Crad lost both his legs, and Furpo lost the keys to his health club locker. In 1970 the brothers responded to a classified ad in the *New York Times Book Review* for "Mongoloid idiots to read manuscripts for a major New York publisher." Their passage prepaid via tramp steamer (all the passengers and crew being tramps), they arrived in New York during the Great Anthrax Plague, a secret C.I.A. bio-warfare experiment which went amiss and was conveniently blamed on Puerto Ricans. Seeking safety, the brothers inadvertently shuffled through Harlem. After a prolonged period of convalescence, they took up their duties at Exposition Press, the famous vanity press on Long Island. Crad was "the man behind" such unacknowledged classics as *Two Days With Hitler In Yellowstone Park* and *God Drives A Flying Saucer*, while Furpo specialized in bilking widows of their life savings. Because of a severe allergy to police detectives, the Kilodneys fled to Canada. Once settled, they set up an apartment-locating service for Nazi war criminals, which was later bought out by Tridel. Crad then began writing short books of obscene stories to sell to children on the street, and Furpo took up drawing, painting, photography, and breeding wolverines in their basement apartment in North York. In 1988 Crad was voted one of the "5,000 best Toronto writers not living anywhere near the Annex." The brothers now share a common-law wife, the famous feminist poet Fluorine Og, whose double vagina is commonly featured in medical textbooks.



Hi, boys and girls! It's time for violent urine and angry clams! It's time to get out the axe and start expressing your true feelings! It's time to charge your brains electrically so you can shoot Z-rays with your eyes at all the phlegm-heads! It's time for your next book report! It's time for

## JUNIOR BRAIN TUMORS IN ACTION!

Here are four more satirical stories from the acid-filled pen of Crad Kilodney that will never find their way into any respectable Canadian story anthology. In "Jumping Rubber Maggot Time," you will meet the revolting Grungeo family, who have a closet full of maggots. In "The Great Vomito," you will learn about the preeminent celebrity of the present day. "The Most Important Story Ever Written About Gary, Indiana" is a surreal farce based on an actual dream by the author. (Don't say we didn't warn you.) And finally, the Kilodney boys (Crad and Furpo) accept an invitation for a "Hare Krishna Weekend" and meet the sect's spiritual leader, Swami Prabhupada. (This one's so inspiring you'll just shit!)

Remember, boys and girls, Crad Kilodney could disappear for no reason at any time, so buy this book (and all his others) now while you have the chance. Buy several, in fact, and send them to friends far away. Demand that your school library carry his books, and if the librarian objects, kill her. If your English teacher has never heard of Crad Kilodney, kill him, too.

As you float into the putrescent 90's, think of the books of Crad Kilodney as lifeboats on the sewage-filled ocean of idiocy, keeping you dry and sane.

\*\*\*\*\*  
CRITICS RAVE ABOUT KILODNEY:

(Sorry. No good quotes available.)

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